

## PLANT SURVIVAL AND GROWTH

This is the time of year when millions of young seedlings and trees are planted. Mother Nature has a notorious reputation for never producing a 100% take. However, with proper handling and care, the highest percentage of your plants will thrive and grow on to maturity.

**THE KEY TO THE SURVIVAL OF ANY PLANT IS TO KEEP THE ROOTS MOIST AT ALL TIMES (NO CHEATING AND NO SOAKING IN A BUCKET OF WATER)**

### HOW TO HANDLE YOUR PLANTS

1. Unpack plants as soon as possible.
2. Sprinkle tops and roots with water.
3. Re-cover roots with damp packing material and cover packing material to prevent drying.
4. DO NOT soak your plants in a bucket of water. This will actually drown the plant by depriving it of oxygen.
5. Plant immediately if possible.

### CARE BEFORE PLANTING

If you cannot plant right away, store stock in a cool and moist area ( garage or basement ).

1. KEEP ROOTS MOIST
2. KEEP SEEDLINGS COOL
3. KEEP FROM FREEZING

### CARE DURING PLANTING

Protect roots from drying: Damage to the roots usually occurs when planting.

1. Keep roots moist and well covered until planting.
2. Dig the hole large enough so roots can spread in a natural position without curling.
3. If fertilizing, USE ONLY SLOW RELEASE tablets. Place tablet on the side of tree, 6 inches from the trunk and 1 inch from the roots. Do Not let roots touch the fertilizer tablet.

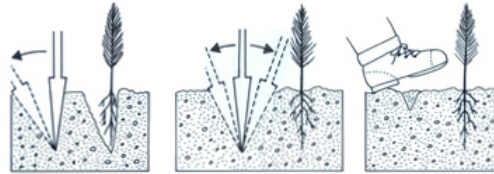
## SEEDLINGS ONLY



1. Use a planting bar to create a hole for the seedling by inserting the bar into the soil and pushing in one direction to create hole.

2. Insert seedling to proper depth (see Figure 2 below for proper planting depth).

3. Insert planting bar into the ground outside the hole.



4. Push the planting bar away from the plant.

5. Push soil towards the planting hole by pushing the planting bar back and forth.

6. Restore soil surface by tamping around the seedling.

\* IF SOIL AMENDMENTS SUCH AS PEAT MOSS, HUMUS, PERLITE AND OR VERMICULITE ARE ADDED. THEY SHOULD BE USED SPARINGLY AND MIXED THOUGHLY INTO THE SOIL.

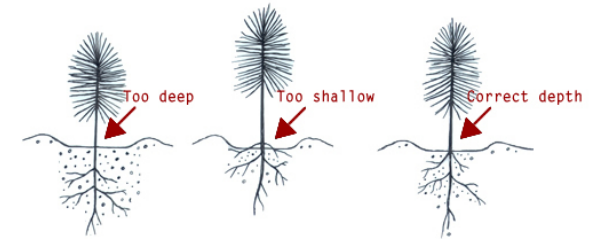
4. Pack soil firmly around roots and add water. Use your heel to firmly pack soil.
5. Leave a slight depression to collect rain Water.
6. Do Not use or top dress with granular or liquid fertilizer when planting. Use only after plant has been established for one year in your yard.
7. Any excessively long roots should be trimmed back to the length of others.

## PLANTING DEPTHS ~ SPACING RIGHT and WRONG

Right depth:  
Soil line about 1 inch above top root.

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Roots are spread out. Soil is tamped in slightly to catch rain water



## TRANSPLANTS ONLY

RIGHT



WRONG

Too deep  
Roots curled



WRONG

Too Shallow. Roots are Exposed to air. This will kill The plant.



**HEDGES:** Space plants that WILL form a hedge

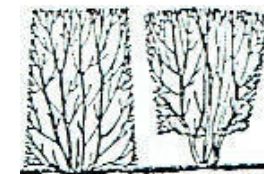
Small: Less than 2 feet height ~ 12 inches apart.

Medium: 3 to 4 feet 2 ~ 2 feet on center

Tall: 4 to 6 feet ~ 3 feet on center

A double staggered row of plants is the most effective.

Trim in the spring. Trim both sides and top or else it will grow wider at the top and become more open at the bottom.



RIGHT ~ WRONG

**GROUND COVER:** Ivy, Pachysandra, Myrtle  
6 inches apart, staggered rows .

Loosen soil at least 1 inch or more deeper than roots. Cover roots with soil almost up to the first leaf. Myrtle should be planted in the small clumps that they come on ( 8-12 leads per clump ). About one month of warm weather will establish the roots. After roots are established, liquid fertilizer may be used about every two weeks during the growing season.

## CARE AFTER PLANTING

### PRUNING

#### FLOWERING TREES AND SHRUBS:

Prune immediately after blooming to give them time to set flower buds for the next year. Do not cut past new growth.

#### EVERGREENS & PINES:

Prune June 1 to July 15, after new growth is entirely out and before it hardens. Start shearing when trees are about 3 feet tall. Prune each succeeding year.

#### SPRUCE & FIR:

Prune July 15 to August 15 is best. When tree is about 3 feet tall. Prune each succeeding year.

### WATERING

Artificial watering of new plantings during dry spells is necessary for several years. Water thoroughly. Do not think that just because the top of soil appears wet your plants are watered. Its what reaches the root zone that counts.

### FERTILIZER

First Year: Only use slow release. Anything else should not be used for it may burn the roots.

Established for one year: Benefit by fertilizing about one month before bud break. This allows

the fertilizer to move into the root zone and be available for absorption when the plant needs nutrients for growth.

### MULCHING

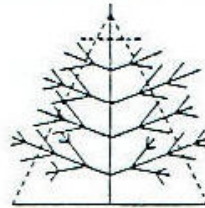
All seedlings and transplants under three years Should be mulched in the fall with grass clippings, straw or leaves.

### TECHNIQUE FOR CHRISTMAS TREES

The top leader is normally sheared to approx. 12 inches in height and the rest of the lower branches in a normal taper from top down. A top leader should be cut at a 45 degree angle.

It is best to shear trees lightly when they are young to get optimum growth. The last couple of years before harvest, begin shearing a little harder to bring the trees into the desired density.

The final year is lighter and only to bring branches with excess growth into the taper form of the rest of the tree. The terminal leader is also left a little longer than other years to get the most height out of your tree.



### SOME CAUSES OF FAILURE IN PLANTINGS

1. Not planting right away.
2. Allowing roots to dry out.
3. Lack of moisture after planting.
4. Too much fertilizer.
5. Poor drainage.
6. Moisture stress.
7. Unprotected in winter months (small plants)
8. Injuries to roots and limbs.
9. Salt spray from highway. (too close to road)

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## DUTCHESS COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



## GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL PLANTING

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